Discussion

1. Read about the history of Earth Day. Do you feel this is an important holiday? Why? Do you think it should be celebrated more than it is now? What would you add to the celebration?

2. How important is it to have city land devoted to parks and recreation? Research DC’s ParkScore and how it ranks in the U.S. here. How does this compare to your hometown?

3. Check out some videos on the US Botanic Garden’s corpse flower. How does the flower benefit from its stinky smell? Given the time it takes to bloom, what does this plant teach you about botany and the life cycles of plants?

4. Review the Smithsonian National Zoo’s endangered species list. Pick one animal to research. What has happened to put them in threat of extinction? What is the zoo doing to conserve or restore the population?

5. Which location highlighted in this video would you most like to see?
EXPLORATION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)
- Take a look at NPS’s history. Examine how many years it took to go from the first national park to the founding of the park service. See how President Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt affected the park service system here. How do you think the park service would differ without the president’s conservation efforts?
- Check out how to become a junior ranger. What national parks in your state have this program? The Junior Ranger program has the motto of “explore, learn, and protect.” If you took the oath, how would you try to protect our national parks?

DC PARKS AND GARDENS
- In addition to the parks mentioned in the video, other DC green spaces include Constitution Gardens, Dumbarton Oaks, Tudor Place, Hillwood Estate & Gardens and Meridian Hill Park. In what ways have gardens and green spaces been used for DC residents other than rest and relaxation?
- Read Frederick Law Olmstead’s history with the National Park Service. Discuss his use of deliberate planning and natural area preservation and how his thoughts influence Landscape Architecture.
- Listen to naturalist Melanie Choukas-Bradley in this video discuss the beauty of DC’s parks. Do you prefer a manicured park or one that is more wild like Rock Creek Park?

A CITY ON TWO RIVERS
- Discover the two rivers that surround Washington, DC: the Potomac and the Anacostia. How did these resources benefit the city’s formation?
- A continuous 20-mile trail on both sides of the Anacostia River, the Riverwalk Trail system is a new recreational amenity and transportation alternative. How important do you think trails, or seamless and scenic travel, are to a city’s residents and visitors?
- Check out the fun water activities you can do, including sailing, kayaking, canoeing and paddle boarding with our good friends at Boating in DC.

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- In the video, we discussed Earth Day demonstrations on the National Mall, held in order to urge the U.S. government to pass laws that protect and improve our environment. Take a look at some of this legislation, including the Clean Air Act.
- Some policies are also determined through Supreme Court cases like Friends of the Earth v. Laidlaw (2000) and Massachusetts v. EPA (2007). Research and discuss how these opinions impacted environmental law and policies.
- The Environmental Protection Agency works to protect human health and the environment. You can visit the agency’s headquarters in DC, located in between the White House and the National Mall, to learn how it enforces legislation, studies environmental issues and helps to clean contaminated areas. Then, take a look at projects you can do at home.

DC’S INITIATIVES FOR A CLEANER CITY
- In the video, we highlighted DC’s efforts to remove plastic bags from our landfills. Examine other city initiatives, including reducing foam food containers and plastic straws. Does your city or county have similar cleanup efforts?

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION
- One of the best ways to reduce carbon emissions is to not use a car. There are many other ways to travel around DC, like biking, boating, walking and using public transportation, including our zero-emission Metrobus. Which mode of transportation would you like to use?
RESOURCES

Visit Washington, DC
National Park Service
Theodore Roosevelt Island
Rock Creek Park
Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Cherry Blossom Trees
National Cherry Blossom Festival
Washington National Cathedral
U.S. National Arboretum
U.S. Botanic Garden
Kingman Island
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian’s National Zoo
DC Department of Energy and Environment
Anacostia Riverkeeper
Serve DC
Casey Trees
Potomac Conservancy
Rock Creek Conservancy
Capital Bikeshare

#MyDCcool